

Mr. Ford's Page

MOST of the things which people say they see, are actually seen. There is no imagination about it. The pessimist who sees things going to pieces, is not deluded; he is correctly reporting what he actually sees. The optimist who sees things soaring up to the height of perfection is an equally good reporter—he is not fooling us or himself—he sees what he says he sees.

But the trouble is, too many people are doing all their seeing within too narrow limits, and while their reports of what they see are true, they are not comprehensive. There is nothing more likely to be misleading than a field of vision so narrow as to leave out part of the points. It is like seeing the elephant so limitedly as to report only his tail or tusks. The animal appears quite differently in a comprehensive view.

Now, all this has an important application to the state of mind in which many people find themselves today. There are perhaps more minds focused on economic problems than ever before, more people thinking, or perhaps it is more truthful to say they are wondering, about the conditions which have befallen human affairs.

It is probably true that though we are all looking and wondering, we do not see very much as yet; but it is still a mighty fact that the minds of the people are focused on their affairs. Formerly we left it all to the government or destiny; but now the governments have failed us, and destiny is not a thing to take without co-operation. And there is a million-fold more chance of seeing when we are looking than when we are not. That is the attitude of people today: they are looking, and presently they will see.

Some people see certain things going to pieces. They see correctly. Certain established customs, methods, processes, institutions, traditions we have been accustomed to lean upon, are undoubtedly going to pieces, and they are going to pieces irrecoverably too.

It is that last element—the irrecoverability—that strikes fear to many people. They thought that "normalcy" meant the recovery of the old things, the re-establishment of the old way, the restoration of the old habitual leaning-posts. Most people thought of "normalcy" in that way—as yesterday come back. But yesterday is not coming back.

The old world is dead, dead, dead. It is beyond recovery. God himself will not restore it, and Satan cannot.

That is the a b c of the new alphabet, namely, the old world is dead. Not dying, but dead. The things you see going to pieces is its funeral, its decay.

If people would only learn this a b c, it would save them from a great deal of confusion.

But the point is this: those who say that everything they see is going to pieces, are telling the truth, *because their eyes are focused on the things which belonged to the old era.* The old era is dead, and is being buried bit by bit. Every day another fragment of it falls into dust.

Now, if that is all that you see—and it will be all that you see if it is all that you look for—no wonder you have the feeling that *everything* is going to pieces.

But if you turn around and see what is coming swiftly up behind your back, as you gaze apprehensively into the past, you will get the other half of the field of vision: you will see the things that are to be.

Perhaps you have seen the oak take color in company with other trees in the autumn. Then came the rains, and the other trees let go their leaves; not so the oak, only a few did he let fall. Then came the winds, and the branches of the other trees were left ragged; but the oak held most of his leafage. Then came the frost,

and all the trees were stripped clean and bare of leaves; but the oak leaves shriveled a bit and took on the tone of old Cordovan leather, but for the most part clung to the parent boughs. They are a cheering sight in winter, those shriveled leaves that defied the frosts of autumn; they are a cheering sight as they defy the winter's snow and blast. Then winter begins to wane, and spring is a promise in the air, and green things begin to appear, but still the oak holds tenaciously to last year's foliage. A little later and the leaves begin to fall—in spring. If you had not looked around upon the earth to see what else was transpiring there, if you did not know what compensating work was being done, you might well think that at last every leaf in the world was about to go.

But this is the fact: the leaves that stayed longest, that we had learned to associate with stability—those are the leaves that fall before the new leaves appear.

In the social order, is it not our seemingly most strongly established things that are beginning to flutter down? Are not the most

solidly essential services the ones that are now most under doom? Certainly, as anyone who focuses his vision only on the passing things will tell you. It is the collapse of the most dominant methods and institutions that alarms most people. Well, it need not alarm anyone. When the leaves of the strongest tree fall, spring is here. If you will widen your field of vision you will soon see other things springing up to take the place of that which is passing.

So, you have a choice. You can sit and look at the fading out of all that made the old "normalcy" and you can wail about calamity to come; or you can stand up and watch the new era come in, looking for your place in its ranks. If you do the latter, you will see an entirely different state of facts. It will not be imagination, or mental suggestion, or this foolish mysticism of pretending things are all right whether they are or not; it will be fact—the thing is true, the new era IS here.

A business man in a small town said it all very well the other day. Said he: "I just try to accustom myself to the thought that I have waked up in a new world. I don't know just what kind of world it is going to be, but I know it is my duty to keep on the watch to find out, so that I may be ready for it. I know there is going to be a new way of salesmanship, and I am trying to find out what it is. I know I shall have to keep wider awake, and I am trying to find out on what lines. I am in a new world and I have got to learn about it all over again.

The only things that have carried across from the old world into the new is Service and Honesty—but you can drop the 'Honesty' and save time, for when you say 'Service' you say it all.

That is the attitude! That man was awake to the fact that the new era is here; he wanted to be alert in all his senses when it tried to teach him something. He says he hasn't learned much yet, but he has learned the basic thing—without which he could not learn anything at all—he has learned that the world is new. If that plain fact could be dinned into people's heads and hearts, so that even without understanding it completely, it could become the time-beat of their thinking, a great deal would have been accomplished.

Certainly many things are going to pieces. They ought to! And if you look at them long enough you may get the impression that everything is going to pieces. You should turn around and look the other way, and see the New Era marching up the side of the hill. Then you will see that although the ruin of all our own stupid, inefficient, unjust and unproductive methods is unavoidable and good, the real cause of their disappearance is the New Way which is pushing them out.

While you are looking, be sure and see it all.

NOTHING is going to pieces except that which will not fit into the New Era. All our stupid, inefficient, unjust and unproductive methods are going to the junk pile, and all the finance and legislative tinkering in the world cannot prevent it. But if you are wise you will not stand looking at the junk pile grow, you will get out and see where the New Era is going to rise, and take a hand at rearing it. People who say everything is going to pieces simply because the junk pile is growing, are looking only at one corner of the field. They have limited their vision to the funeral of the Old Era. Turn around, look the other way, and you will see another procession coming on.